VOTING OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—(*continued*).

President : The House will now resume discussion on Demand No. VIII—Excise Department. Mr. Arumukham Pillai, you have five more minutes to your credit.

DEMAND VIII—EXCISE DEPARTMENT—(*contd.*)

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai : Sir, the Commissioner is satisfied that things are all right and wishes to assure us so. But the facts are different. Neither in the Customs Houses audited by the Account Officer nor in the other institutions inspected by the Assistant Excise Commissioner the revenue is safe and proof to embezzlement and fraud.

Inspection by supervising officers is not audit. The Account Office cannot do justice by their audit in the Customs Department where the revenue is realised from various sources. They will only see that the expenditure does not exceed the sanctioned allotment. In the case of receipts they can audit the revenues of those departments wherein the revenue lies in books but in the case of customs houses where the revenue is realised from various sources the Account Officer cannot do full justice.

The fraud disclosed in Trivandrum and Quilon illustrates amply how the outside audit or supervision is futile to detect fraud in Customs Houses. In order to have an effective audit of Customs Houses it is highly necessary that at least a staff consisting of some of the experienced officers in the department be constituted as in the Postal and Railway Departments. Sir, the question of finding out new sources of revenue ought to engage the attention of Government. As a first measure—I submit that as a temporary measure at least—this procedure ought to be adopted.

Mr. M. N. Parameswaran Pillai : Sir, I also support the motion. Till a few years back when there was material prosperity all over the country, every department of Government was allowed to enjoy immunity from attacks ; but with the growing intensity of the economic depression the various departments, one after the other, have come under the search light of public criticism. Naturally, the Excise Department which is one of the major departments of the State has, and mostly rightly too, to bear the brunt of the criticism. It has been the peculiar misfortune of this department that, for years together, its administration has been entrusted to men who have had neither sufficient experience and enthusiasm nor special knowledge of the broad problems relating to the department nor any insight into the true principles to be kept in view in administering the department in the best interests of the people.

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[Mr. M. N. Parameswaran Pillai.]

The responsibility in this matter rests entirely with Government, who make the selection more to provide for particular individuals than in the interests of efficient and better administration of the department. There can be no good in running this department with the true spirit of a toddy or arrack vendor whose chief concern always is to make large profits out of his business by attracting the greatest number of customers, and providing them with all possible facilities. The principle of maximum revenue with minimum consumption is now being worked actually in the reverse order. This department is one of those few departments whose administration requires a capable man at the helm with real knowledge about the world and its excise, customs and tariff problems so that the policy of the department may be so shaped from time to time to the advantage of the State as well as its people. How can we expect this department to be run for the benefit of the people when its avowed policy, as repeatedly expressed by the Commissioner on the floor of this House and the Assembly, is to raise the rentals to the highest possible degree. I feel no doubt that if the head of the Excise Department in any other part of the world had made an open declaration of such a policy on the floor of the legislature it would have cost him his appointment. Fortunately in Travancore, the officers have licence or privilege to say or do any absurd thing without the fear of being questioned by any authority.

Sir, increase of duty on arrack and increase of tree-tax are accepted as sure and effective means of restricting consumption so as to bring about total prohibition in the long run. But the present departmental policy of increasing the rentals every time to an abnormal degree is practically producing counteracting influences. In the Madras Presidency what we find is that the duty on liquor has always been uniformly kept higher and the vend rents have never borne an unduly high percentage to total taxation. Further, it is universally recognised to be a sound principle of excise administration to keep the rentals always in proportion to consumption and to maintain some sort of uniformity in the matter of rentals of the shops situated in one and the same taluk. These principles are not kept in view in the administration of the department ; so much so we find there is much room for malpractices of all kind which certainly take the goal of prohibition far away from our vision. Every wholesome rule is allowed to be violated.

Mr. M. Govindan (*Nominated*) : May I know from the member whether, at the time of auction, shops should not be sold to the highest bidder

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Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai: Certainly, revenue should not be the sole object of the Excise Commissioner. There are ever so many principles which the Commissioner has to keep in mind in administering the department. Every rule is now violated or disregarded in the feverish anxiety to secure more revenue. Every officer in the department seems to imagine or believe or is somewhat obsessed with the idea that his continuance in service and promotions depend very much upon his success in bringing greater revenue to the State coffers, whether it be by creating new facilities for drink or by developing the drinking propensities of men. No doubt, solemn assurances have been made by successive Dewans that the desire or policy of the State is not to make revenue out of drink to the detriment of the welfare of its subjects ; but still we find that there has been systematic and steady increase in consumption.

Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran: May I know from the member whether it is on account of the Excise Commissioner or on account of the present policy of Government that the consumption is increasing like this ? May I also know whether he represents the views of the toddy contractors or the drunkards ?

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai: I only wish to place before this House some of the principles laid down by some eminent administrators both in Travancore and in other parts of the world in regard to the abkari administration. Since none of these principles is kept in view by the present Excise Commissioner, consumption of liquor has naturally increased. I do not know whether the toddy contractors and drunkards have really any views on the subject. If they have any, this House will be indebted to the honourable member if he could enlighten it with those views.

Mr. C. M. Joseph (*Changanachery* cum *Peermade*): ഷാപ്പുകളുടെ ലേലത്തുക കുറയുകയും മദ്യം സുലഭമായി കിട്ടുകയും ചെയ്താൽ മദ്യപാനം കുറയുമെന്നാണോ മെമ്പർ വിചാരിക്കുന്നത് ?

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai: മദ്യത്തിന്റെ ഡ്യൂട്ടി കൂട്ടുകയാണു വേണ്ടത്. അല്ലാതെ ലേലത്തുക വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുകയല്ല ചെയ്യേണ്ടത്. അതാണു ശരിയായ തത്വമെന്നറിവുള്ളവർ കാരണസഹിതം തെളിയിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

Sir, I have only very little time at my disposal.

President: You can decline to answer.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai: The duty on liquors should be increased and not rentals. I am not going into any lengthy

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[Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai.]

discussion on this point at this stage. The Government always show a great reluctance to forego any portion of this abkari revenue. More than half the revenue of the State, Rs. 116,83,337 according to the figures of the Administration Report for 1108, is supplied by this department and, I am sure, every pie of it and more is required by Government to keep up or maintain their costly administration.

Another point which I wish to state in this connection is that at present the collection of revenue absorbs almost the whole time of the officers of this department. From the head of the department down to the low paid peon we have now a group of revenue collectors.

Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran: May I know from the member whether he has any idea of the revenue collected from abkari?

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai: Yes.

Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran: Does it come to half the revenue?

Mr M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai: No. I referred to the whole contribution made by the Excise Department. Sir, in spite of the serious objection made even by some of the previous Excise Commissioners in regard to the auction and collection works being retained in the hands of the Excise staff, as such works greatly interfere with its legitimate duty, namely, preventive work, no attempt is made to relieve the staff of these onerous responsibilities. Both in the Madras Presidency and in the Sister State of Cochin the auction and collection works are even today entrusted with the Land Revenue Department. If such an arrangement is made it is sure to improve the efficiency of preventive work and is bound to produce satisfactory results.

Every year we are told that in furtherance of a policy of prohibition the department has been reducing the number of shops from time to time. But, I think, there can be no force in that contention so long as we find that in several parts of the country every tapper's house is also a liquor shop. Then again, as has been stated in the Administration Reports of the Excise Department for the past few years that in Changanachery local option is being tried by Government, but every time we look in vain to know the result of this experiment. But I can only say that it is a sheer foolishness to try local option at Changanachery or in any other town when all around the town the Department allows several liquor shops to exist and flourish.

Lastly, I wish to point out the culpable negligence shown by the Excise Department towards the salt industry in the country.

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Although it is several years since the State undertook the monopoly for the manufacture of salt, and although we have extensive sea-boards and alloms, yet even today our State is not self-supporting in regard to the production and supply of salt. So long as this kind of administration of the department continues we are perhaps destined to eat other's salt.

Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai: Sir, the Government order reviewing the report of the Excise Department for the year 1108 contains this passage: —

> "The excise duty on jaggery arrack and coco-brandy was enhanced. Local option at Changanachery was continued. The number of arrack and toddy shops in the State was reduced. Rules were passed for the grant of rewards for the detection of offences under the Abkari Regulation as recommended by the Excise Committee."

I propose to challenge every point contained in this statement. Whatever may be the arguments that may be advanced towards the criticisms on the working of the department, the main argument underlying my criticism is that there is enormous leakage of revenue on account of the inefficient administration of the Excise Department.

The first statement there is the reduction of the number of shops. I can understand that arrack shops have been reduced by 72 in number. But I hope I will not be challenged if I refute that statement. Even though, according to the records, that number may be correct when the above statement was added in the Administration Report, I know that there are more shops in existence than the number of shops indicated by the licences. So, Sir, there is absolutely no meaning in saying that 72 shops were reduced when, as a matter of fact, I know a number of unlicensed and unauthorised shops are being run in different parts of Travancore, and toddy and arrack are issued from them to the local consumers. If the Excise Commissioner proposes to challenge me on this point, I can give him an instance. There is one shop No. 8 in Chirayinkil taluk. That is the only licensed and authorised shop that could be conducted by the licensee. But on the other hand what do we find? The same licensee conducts 3 shops more in different places. I deduce two points from that, apart from challenging the correctness of the figure.....

Mr. C. O. Madhavan: May I know whether it is toddy or arrack shop?

Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai: This is a question which requires further explanation. When an unauthorised shop is allowed to be conducted with the connivance of the departmental subordinates we can more or less imagine what sorts of mischief could possibly be done by that shop. Illicit distillation is going on

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[Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai.]

there. Apart from toddy, toddy arrack is also issued from that unlicensed shop. Therefore it does not mean anything when it is said that the number of shops in the State has been reduced by 72.

Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran : May I know whether there was any complaint from the arrack contractor against the toddy contractor to this effect ?

Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai : The honourable member exercises a monopoly in interrupting every speaker.

President : If you want to answer, you may answer, otherwise refuse.

Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai : Whatever topics I propose to deal, I propose to deal exhaustively. I request the honourable member to hear me.

Therefore, my point, Sir, is that even the figures on this account are entirely misleading. When unauthorised shops are being allowed to be conducted, the figures of liquor consumption as given in the statistics are misleading and incorrect. More arrack and toddy must have been consumed by drunkards than is evinced by the Administration Report of the department.

Before leaving this point, I also want to draw the attention of Government to one great defect in the rules promulgated for the sale of shops on contract. There is a clause in that which makes the Excise Commissioner the absolute master of the situation. Therefore when he confirms a shop in the name of a contractor, even the Government are powerless to revise the order of confirmation. On account of this, there is an enormous loss of revenue to the Government. I maintain that, if the Excise Commissioner proposes to challenge me in that matter, I will just bring to his memory the history of shop No. 10 in the Agastisvaram taluk when it was auctioned last year. I maintain, Sir, that the only consideration which ought to weigh with the departmental head when he confirms the auction of a shop in the name of a bidder is the solvency of the person and his honesty. Nothing more than that the Excise Commissioner is expected to know. In this particular instance which I referred to above, a man offered a higher amount and said that he was prepared to advance the whole amount provided the shop is confirmed in his name. But the Excise Commissioner viewed otherwise and confirmed the shop in the name of another man whose name I do not propose to divulge because it will involve the Excise Commissioner in a difficult situation. I will

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simply bring it to the attention of Government that the only consideration that ought to be looked into in confirming the sale of a shop is the solvent circumstances of the bidder and his honesty. Therefore, I say that the absolute power vested in the Excise Commissioner ought to be withdrawn at the earliest opportunity. I know, Sir, instances of which Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai was showing only one side of the picture. There is the other side of the picture, *i. e.*, the interference in the sale of shops by the departmental subordinates, and I do not want to hide it from this House. Even the Excise Commissioner has interfered when people were coming forward to bid shops for higher amounts. I would pointedly refer to him the history of a recent auction of shop No. 13 at Karamanai which has been confirmed in the name of a lady. The department is boasting that its goal is temperance. I ask whether there is anything more disgraceful than confirming this shop No. 13 in the name of the lady when there were gentlemen to bid for a higher amount. Whatever may be the measures that the department has adopted towards temperance, this one instance will cut at the root of the morale of the whole department. That shop will attract more men towards the consumption of the materials issued by Mr. C. O. Madhavan and the members of his department. For Heaven's sake I would request the Government to see that no shops are given to ladies.

I find, Sir, that there is a phenomenal fall in the revenue from this department during 1108 as compared to the revenue of 1107, mentioned in paragraphs 28 and 29 of the Administration Report of this department. In 1107 the revenue was Rs. 4,95,000 odd, whereas in 1108 it has come down to Rs. 2,80,000 odd or nearly one half. I attribute this fall to the working of the department. But for the inefficiency and mismanagement of the department, there could not have been this tremendous fall in the value realised from the rentals of these shops.

Then, Sir, another temperance measure that he has adopted is enhancement of duty on arrack by 3 annas per gallon. I ask the question whether putting forward some untenable, misleading and incorrect argument is the way to convince the general public that the ideal of the department is one of temperance. On the other hand I ask the question, with regard to minor details which I had already pressed on prior occasions, what measures the Excise Commissioner has taken to reduce the proof strength of toddy and jaggery arracks, to remove the location of toddy and arrack shops from the vicinity of schools, public institutions and religious institutions and to limit the hours of issue. In all these slight matters, what measures the department took, I would like to know. From time to time, we are

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[Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai.]

bringing to the notice of the head of the department the various defects on account of the working of these shops during untimely hours. Even boys now resort to these shops and parents do not know what to do with the boys. The shop contractors even bribe these boys and attract them. The boys sell whatever they get from the house and go to the shops. Sir, drink by juvenile population has enormously increased. Therefore the object of the department should not only be to enhance the revenue and somehow justify its existence as a department but various aspects of the question have to be considered by its head.

President : Your time is up.

Mr. Kattiyattu Sivarama Panickar (*Vaikam* cum *Shertalai*) : Sir, I beg to oppose the motion and in doing so I wish to draw the pointed attention of the Government to the necessity of the production of home salt.

Mr. M. N. Parameswaran Pillai : May I know whether the member is opposing the motion of Mr. Arumukham Pillai or the motion of the Excise Commissioner ?

Mr. Kattiyattu Sivarama Panickar : I oppose the motion brought forward by the Excise Commissioner. Time and again it has been stated by the accredited representatives of the people that the policy of the department should be to make the country self-sufficient in the production of salt. But it has to be regretted that year after year the production of salt is decreasing even though we have enough of alloms to be worked out and if they are worked out efficiently it is sure that we can turn out the salt that is required for our consumption and a great deal more for export. But, the Excise Commissioner has once again come forward with his tell-tale story that the weather conditions were unfavourable and that the licensees did not do their part of the work in time. Sir, these are the reasons that can be cited at any time and Travancore being under the influence of monsoons cannot be expected to be free from rain during any year. But what I ask is what disciplinary action has the Excise Commissioner taken against these licensees for failure of doing their part of the work in time. I am sure if these people are allowed to work or given the opportunities to work during the early months of the year, say in Makaram, Kumbham and Meenam, the production can be made much more satisfactory. If you go through the report carefully you can understand that in alloms where bunds have been introduced and the protection walls are built, there the production is considerably higher.

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The production was small in alloms where these defects were not removed. So, what I wish to say is that these things should be attended to properly by the Excise Department itself if the licensees are not coming forward to do them in time. Again there are certain other things also which have to be attended to. Proper attention has not been paid to combat fresh water percolations into the alloms and again satisfactory arrangements have not been made to get brine into the alloms in proper time. If these things are done, what I wish to point out is that we can manufacture the salt required for our consumption as also a great deal for export.

Another point which I wish to urge is that the Excise Commissioner is an officer who has got so much to do, whose hands are full due to his arduous duties in various connections regarding the abkari, ganja, opium, tobacco and customs and a series of other things. I suppose it will not be possible for one officer to attend to all these items together. It is therefore safer in the interest of the country to separate the Salt Department from the Excise altogether and entrust it under one officer, never matter of what grade, even if he is only of the grade of an Assistant Excise Commissioner. If it is entrusted in the hands of one particular officer, I am sure that while receiving its due share of attention, the production year after year will increase in volume.

Another point to which I would draw the attention of Government is about the cultivation of tobacco. It has been suggested on previous occasions that it is absolutely necessary to try to see whether tobacco can be cultivated in our country. It has become an impending necessity also that we do not import Jaffna tobacco as much as we have been doing. We should not import Jaffna products as the Ceylonees are competing with our trade in copra in this country. It will be a tit-for-tat policy to the producers outside who are trying to do havoc in our country.

Then as regards Abkari revenue, I might say that though there has been a slight reduction in the number of shops, yet what the department has done is to increase the number of trees considerably for tapping purposes with a view to get a higher revenue.

But it has been the frequently announced policy of the department and also of the Government that temperance movement must be started and supported, so that in course of time nobody in the country will resort to drink. What we actually see, on the other hand, is that the drink evil is running riot everywhere and is actually reducing the poor people in the country, especially during these days of acute economic depression, to a state of absolute penury. Sir, revenue must not be the sole objective of the Excise Officers.

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[Mr. Kattiyattu Sivarama Panickar.]

What they ought to do is to introduce, as far as possible, economy and thrift in the minds of the poor people in the country, and try their level best to correct people addicted to the drink evil and to make it as difficult and as costly and as inconvenient as possible for these people to get liquor. The fees for the tapping of trees must be made prohibitive and liquor must be made very costly. But what the department actually does now is to afford ample convenience to all sorts of people to take to the drink evil and to stick to it. Government must certainly not allow that state of affairs to continue any longer. Unless conditions are improved in time, I am afraid our country will lag behind the cultured and civilized nations of the world.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam (*Muvattupuzha* cum *Todupuzha*): ഈ ഉപക്ഷേപത്തെ ഞാൻ അനുകൂലിക്കുന്നു. ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറിലുള്ള ഭരണവൈകല്യങ്ങളെ സഭമുമ്പാകെ കൊണ്ടുവരണമെന്നുള്ളതാണ് എന്റെ ഉദ്ദേശം. പതിനെട്ടു കളരികളിൽ പതിനെട്ടു ആശാന്മാരെയും പയററിയിട്ടുള്ള ക്ഷുദ്രരാണു കമ്മിഷണരൊഴിച്ചു ബാക്കിയുള്ള ഇതിലെ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ. ഇതു സാധുവായ ഒരാളെ അല്ല ഇതുപോലുള്ളവരുടെ കമ്മീഷണരായി നിയമിക്കേണ്ടതു്. അദ്ദേഹത്തെപ്പററിഎനിക്കു വളരെ ബഹുമാനമാണ്. എന്നാൽ ലാൻറു റവന്യൂകമ്മീഷണരെപ്പോലെയുള്ള ഒരാളിനെവേണം ഇതിൽ കമ്മീഷണരായി വയ്ക്കേണ്ടതു്. അദ്ദേഹം കരംപിരിവിനു താമസംവരുത്തുന്നു എന്ന കാരണത്താൽ എന്റെ നിയോജകമണ്ഡലത്തിലുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥൻമാരുടെ ശമ്പളംപിടിച്ചു രിക്കുന്നു എന്നു കേൾക്കുന്നു. ഈ മാതിരി ഉള്ള കാര്യങ്ങളൊന്നും എക്സൈസ് കമ്മീഷണർ ചെയ്യുന്നില്ല. അദ്ദേഹം നല്ല മനുഷ്യനാണ്. ലേലത്തുക വളരെ ക്രൂരതലാണ്, നഷ്ടമാണ് എന്നു സങ്കടം പറഞ്ഞാൽ അവരുടെ ഇഷ്ടം അനുസരിച്ചു് എത്രപ്രാവശ്യം വേണമെങ്കിലും തുക കുറച്ചുകൊടുക്കുന്നുണ്ടു്. എക്സൈസ് കമ്മീഷണർ കീഴ്സിൽബന്ധികളുടെ ശമ്പളം പിടിക്കുകയോ അവരെ മറുവിധത്തിൽ ഉപദ്രവിക്കുകയൊ ചെയ്യുന്നില്ല. അവരെ വേണ്ടപോലെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകമാത്രമേ ചെയ്യുന്നുള്ളൂ. അതുകൊണ്ടു എക്സൈസ് കമ്മീഷണരെപോലെയുള്ള ഒരാളെ ലാൻറു റവന്യൂകമ്മീഷണരാക്കിയാൽ സാമ്പത്തികാധ്വപതനം പിടിപെട്ടു ജനങ്ങൾ നട്ടംതിരിയുന്ന ഈ കാലത്തു സാധുകർഷകജനങ്ങൾക്കു വളരെ രക്ഷ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നതാണ്. അതിനാൽഈ രണ്ടുപേരെയും പരസ്പരം മാററി നിയമിക്കുന്നതു തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലെ

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സാധു കർഷകർക്ക് ഒരു വലിയ രക്ഷയായിരിക്കുകയില്ലയോ എന്നു ഞാൻ സംശയിക്കുന്നു.

Mr. K George(*Land Revenue and Income Tax Commissioner*): ശമ്പളംപിടിച്ചു എന്നു പറഞ്ഞതു് എന്താണ്?

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : എന്താണെന്നുള്ളതു എനിക്കറിഞ്ഞുകൂടാ. ഇന്നലെ എനിക്കുകിട്ടിയ മലയാളി എന്ന പ്രതിദിനപത്രത്തിൽ എന്റെ നിയോജകമണ്ഡലത്തിലെ ഒരു ലേഖകന്റെ കുറിപ്പിൽ കാണുന്ന ഭാഗമാണ് ഈ പ്രസ്താവനയ്ക്കു കാരണമായിട്ടുള്ളതു്.

Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran : പത്രപ്രസ്താവനകളെ അടിസ്ഥാനപ്പെടുത്തി ഈ സഭയിൽ പറയരുതു്.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : പത്രപ്രസ്താവനകളെപ്പറ്റി എനിക്കു വലിയ മതിപ്പാണുള്ളതു്. പൊതുജനാഭിപ്രായങ്ങളെ അനാദരിച്ചു പരിഷ്കൃതഗവണ്മെന്റുകൾക്കു ഭരണം നടത്തുന്നതിനുപോലും മടികാണിച്ചുവരുന്നില്ല. മെമ്പറിന്റെ പ്രസ്താവനയിൽ ഞാൻ അത്ഭുതപ്പെടുന്നു.

ഷാപ്പുലേലംവരുന്ന അവസരത്തിൽ വിവിധവിധത്തിലുള്ള ആശകൾ നൽകി കണ്ടാക്ടർമാരെ ആകർഷിക്കുന്നു. ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റു് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ ജനങ്ങളെ അതിലേക്കു പ്രേരിപ്പിക്കുകയും പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുവരുന്നു. ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ അവരുടെ കീഴിലുള്ള സിൽബന്ധികളെ വിളിച്ചു പല സഹായങ്ങളും മറ്റും ചെയ്തുകൊടുക്കാമെന്നു വാഗ്ദാനംചെയ്യുന്നു. സ്പെഷ്യൽ പാർട്ടി അന്വേഷിക്കാൻ വരുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ അതു ഞാൻ നോക്കിക്കൊള്ളാം. അടുത്ത സീനിയർ ഞാനാണു്. ഞാൻ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെന്റു മേധാവിയായിരിക്കുന്നിടത്തോളം കാലം അതിനെപ്പറ്റി ഭയപ്പെടണ്ടാ എന്നു് ഓഫീസർ പറയുന്നു. സി. ഐ ഡീസ്സ് ഉണ്ടല്ലോ, അവർ വ്യാജം കണ്ടുപിടിക്കുന്നെങ്കിൽ എന്തു ചെയ്യും എന്നു ചിലർ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരോടു തന്നെ ചോദിക്കുന്നു. സി. ഐ. ഡീസ്സ് വിചാരിച്ചാൽ എന്തുചെയ്യും, ചിലരുള്ളവരുടെ ആനുകൂല്യം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നാൽ ഒന്നും ചെയ്യാൻ സാധിക്കുകയില്ല. ഈമാതിരി പ്രസ്താവനകളും കൂടുതൽ ശക്തികളും അധികാരസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നും നാടുകിടിയുള്ള അഴിമതികളും സ്വയം ഒഴിഞ്ഞുവിച്ചുകൊടുത്തുവരുന്ന നയം ഇന്നും ഇന്നലേയും തുടങ്ങിയതല്ല. പതിക്കാത്ത പണകളിൽ നിന്നും കള്ളെടുത്തു പണംചാമായം വാറ്റിയെടുക്കുന്നു. ഇവകളെ വലിയ രഹസ്യമൊന്നുംകൂടാതെ തോട്ടങ്ങളിലും മറ്റും കൊണ്ടുപോയി ചിലവാക്കു

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[Mr. J. John Kattakayam.]

ന്നു. ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറു അറിഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ ഷാപ്പുകളും ഉപഷാപ്പുകളും ഓരോ ചെത്തുകാരന്റെ വീടുകൾതോറും നടത്തിവരുന്നു. കഴിഞ്ഞപ്രാവശ്യം ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറിലെ അഴിമതികളെപ്പറ്റി ചില സംഗതികൾ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചതുകൊണ്ടാണോ എന്നു തോന്നുമാറു് എന്റെ വസതിയുടെ മുറ്റുമായി അനേകം ഉപഷാപ്പുകൾ ഇപ്പോൾ സ്ഥാപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ക്ഷേത്രം പള്ളി ഇവകളിലെ ഉത്സവങ്ങൾ അവസരങ്ങളിലും മറ്റു വിശേഷാവസരങ്ങളിലും മറ്റും കാപ്പിക്കടകൾ നിരന്നിരിക്കുംപോലെയാണു വ്യാജമദ്യങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ടുവന്നു വില്പന നടത്തിവരുന്നതു്. ദേവാലയങ്ങളുടേയും സ്കൂളുകളുടേയും അടുത്തു ഷാപ്പുകൾ സ്ഥാപിക്കാൻ പാടില്ലാഎന്നു എത്രയോ കാലമായി ജനപ്രതിനിധികൾ മുറവിളി കൂട്ടുന്നുണ്ടു്. ഈ ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറിലെ ഭരണവൈകല്യങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റി പറയുംതോറും ഉപഷാപ്പുകളുടെയും മറ്റും എണ്ണം കൂട്ടിവരുന്നുണ്ടോ എന്നു സംശയിക്കേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. വൃക്ഷക്കരം ഇപ്പോൾ ക്രമാതീതമായി വർദ്ധിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. അതിനെ കുറക്കുന്നതായാൽ അതു വ്യാജശമനത്തിനു് അല്പം കാരണമായേക്കാം.

ഒന്നരലക്ഷംരൂപായുടെ ഉപ്പു ബാംബയിൽനിന്നും ഇവിടെ വരുത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഈ രാജ്യത്തേക്കു ആവശ്യമുള്ള ഉപ്പു് ഇവിടെതന്നെ കൃഷിചെയ്തു് ഉണ്ടാക്കാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നതാണു്. ഇവിടത്തെ ഉപ്പുകൃഷി കഴിഞ്ഞകൊല്ലത്തിൽ പരാജയത്തിലാണു കലാശിച്ചതു്. കാലാവസ്ഥയുടെ മാറ്റംകൊണ്ടാണു് അങ്ങിനെ സംഭവിച്ചതെന്നു സമാധാനംപറയുന്നു. എങ്കിലും കാലാവസ്ഥ എപ്പോഴും ദോഷകരമായി വരാൻ ഇടയുള്ളതല്ല. അതുകൊണ്ടു് ഉപ്പുകൃഷിയെ അഭിവൃദ്ധിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിനു ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറു ശ്രമിക്കേണ്ടതാണു്.

ഈ രാജ്യത്തെ ജനങ്ങളുടെ ആവശ്യത്തിനു വേണ്ടിയ പുകയിലക്കായി ഏഴരക്കോടിരൂപാ ഇവിടെനിന്നും വിദേശത്തേക്കു പോയികൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. പുകയിലകൃഷി ഇവിടെ നടത്താമെങ്കിൽ ഇത്രയുംസംഖ്യ നമുക്കു ലാഭംകിട്ടുന്നതാണു്. സിലോൺകാർ നമ്മോടു കാണിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള കടുംകൈക്കു് ഒരു പ്രതിവിധിയായിത്തീരുകയും ചെയ്യും. ജാപ്പാണം പുകയിലയ്ക്കു കൊച്ചിയിൽ തീരുവ ഫൻ൦ രൂപായും തിരുവിതാംകൂറിൽ തീരുവ ഫനു൪ രൂപായുമാണു്. തീരുവ ക്രമാതീതമായി വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കണം. ബ്രിട്ടീഷിൻഡ്യായിൽ ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്ന തീരുവയനുസരിച്ചുമാത്രമെ ഇവിടെ തീരുവ മുമത്താൻ പാടുള്ളു എന്നു് ഒരു ഉടമ്പടി ഉണ്ടാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ടു്. സിലോൺ കൊപ്രായുടെ തീരുവ കുറയ്ക്കുക

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തെന്നു ജനപ്രതിനിധികൾ ശക്തിയായി വാദപ്രതിവാദം ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

ബ്രിട്ടിഷ് ഗവണ്മെൻറുമായി തിരുവിതാംകൂർഗവണ്മെൻറു നടത്തിയ എഴുത്തുകുത്തിനെപ്പറ്റി തനിക്കറിവില്ലെന്നും ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് ഗവണ്മെൻറിന്റെ ആനുകൂല്യം ലഭിക്കുന്നതിന് അങ്ങിനെ ഒരു അഭ്യർത്ഥന വന്നിട്ടുണ്ടോ എന്നുള്ളതിനെപ്പറ്റി തനിക്കു യാതൊരറിവും ഇല്ലെന്നും സാമ്രാജ്യനിയമസഭയിലെ ഗവണ്മെൻറുമെമ്പർ മിസ്റ്റർ ജോസഫ് ഭോർ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഒട്ടാവാ ഉടമ്പടിയുടെ കരാർ അനുസരിച്ചാണ് സിലോൺ ഗവണ്മെൻറിന് ഈ വിഷയത്തിൽ പ്രഥമസ്ഥാനം നൽകിയിട്ടുള്ളതു്.

Rao Sahib Dr. N. Kunjan Pillai : മിസ്റ്റർ ജോസഫ് ഭോർ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചു എന്നു പറഞ്ഞതു് എപ്പോഴാണു"?

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : മിസ്റ്റർ ജോസഫ് ഭോർ കുറെ മുൻപു പ്രസ്താവിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടു് എന്നുമാത്രമെ തൽക്കാലം പറയാൻ നിവൃത്തിയുള്ളൂ.

Rao Sahib Dr. N. Kunjan Pillai : അതിൽപിന്നീടാണോ അതിനെപ്പറ്റി ഇവിടെ നിന്നും ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് ഗവണ്മെൻറിലേക്കു എഴുതിഅയച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതു്.

Mr. J. John Kattakayam : അങ്ങിനെയായിരിക്കാം. ബാംബെയിലെ തുണിച്ചരക്കുകൾക്കു സിലോൺ ഗവണ്മെൻറു പ്രഥമസ്ഥാനം നൽകിയിട്ടുണ്ടു്. എന്നാൽ സിലോണിൽ ചിലവാകുന്നതിനേക്കാൾക്കൂടുതൽ തുണിത്തരങ്ങൾ നമ്മുടെ രാജ്യത്താണു ചിലവാകുന്നതു്. അതിലേക്കു എന്തെങ്കിലും കണക്കുകൾ ഉണ്ടോ എന്നു അറിയുന്നില്ല. അതുപോലെ ഇൻഡ്യയിൽ ആകെ പത്തൊൻപതുലക്ഷത്തി എൺപതിനായിരം ഏക്കർ സ്ഥലത്തു തെങ്ങുകൃഷി നടത്തിവരുന്നുണ്ടു്. അതിൽ ൪,൯൯,൦൪൫ ഏക്കർ തെങ്ങുകൃഷിസ്ഥലം തിരുവിതാംകൂറിലും ൪൫,൨൯൯ ഏക്കർ സ്ഥലം കൊച്ചിയിലും ൪,൬൦,൯൯൦ ഏക്കർ സ്ഥലം മലബാറിലും ഉണ്ടു്. ൨൯൦൯-ൽ ആലപ്പുഴ, കൊച്ചി കോഴിക്കോടു് ഈ തുറമുഖങ്ങളിൽനിന്നും ൨൯൦൯ ലക്ഷം രൂപായുടെ തുണിച്ചരക്കുകൾ ബോംബെ മുതലായ സ്ഥലങ്ങളിൽനിന്നും ഇവിടെ വന്നു ഇറങ്ങിയിട്ടുണ്ടു്. തീവണ്ടിവഴിയായും മറ്റും ഇതിൽക്കൂടുതലായ ഒരു തുകയുടെ തുണികൾ ഇവിടെ വന്നിരിക്കണം. ഇന്നു സിലോൺകാരുടെ സ്ഥിതി നോക്കാം. ൨൯൦൯-ൽ സിലോൺകാർ വാങ്ങിയ തു

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[Mr. J.John Kattakayam]

ണിച്ചരക്കു വന്ന ലക്ഷം രൂപായുടേയും ഫർണസ്-ൽ സിലോൺകാർ വാങ്ങിയതു രണ്ടു ലക്ഷം രൂപായുടെയും തുണിച്ചരക്കുകളാണു ഇതിനു പുറമെ കപ്പൽവഴിയല്ലാതെ സിലോണിലേക്കു തുണിച്ചരക്കു കൊണ്ടു പോകുന്നതിനു നിവൃത്തിയില്ല.

കേരളം മൂന്നുഗവണ്മെൻറുകളുടെ കീഴിൽ കഴിയുന്നതിനാൽ ഇപ്പോൾ നമുക്കു ശരിയായ സംഘടനയില്ല. ഇതിനെ പരിഹരിക്കുവാൻ കേരളക്കാരായുള്ളവർ കൂടിയോജിച്ചുള്ള ശ്രമങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയില്ലന്നു ഒരു നിശ്ചയമുണ്ടാക്കി അതു പ്രവൃത്തിരൂപത്തിൽ വരുത്താതെ ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ അനാശാസ്യസംഭവങ്ങൾക്കു ഒരു പ്രതിവിധി ഉണ്ടാകുമെന്നും എനിക്കു വിചാരമില്ല.

Mr. C.O. Madhavan : Sir, Mr. Arumukham Pillai, the mover of the motion, emphasised the necessity for more efficient audit of the accounts of our Customs Houses. He is under the impression that, at present, there is practically no audit of the Customs accounts. I may inform the House that it is not so. Copies of the *nal vazhies*, manifests and *revanas* (receipts for the payment of the customs duty) are being sent every day from all the Customs Houses to the respective Assistant Commissioners, and are carefully examined there to see if duty has been correctly calculated and realised. Mistakes, if any, are found out and pointed out to the Customs Houses concerned. If there is any balance due, it is promptly realised. This is the most efficient kind of audit possible under the circumstances. I do not contend that there is absolutely no possibility of leakage. Sir, as long as human nature is what it is, we cannot expect perfection anywhere. It is quite possible that, once in a way, if the Customs House Officers collude with the officers in charge of the manifest registering stations as well as the owners of the goods, they can defraud the Government. But I must say that such instances are very very rare ; and, whenever they are brought to the notice of the authorities, prompt disciplinary action is always taken.

In addition to the daily checking of accounts, already explained, the Assistant Commissioners inspect every one of the Customs Houses once every quarter. The accounts are examined carefully during such inspection.

Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai : Is it the member's opinion that there is no possibility of checking the quantity of imports and exports, on which duty is levied, if the Cusoms House Officer is inclined to help the exporter or importer ?

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(Mr. C. O. Madhavan was standing when Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai was putting the question).

President : Order, order ; two members cannot be standing at the same time. How often is the Chair to draw the attention of the Honourable members to this point ? Government members ought to know how to behave better.

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : I am sorry, Sir,

I do not deny the possibility of such wrong entries in our books. But my point is that such instances are extremely rare. If the honourable member had followed my observations, I submit, Sir, there would have been no occasion for this question.

In addition to the quarterly inspections by the Assistant Commissioners and the daily examination of the *nal vazhies*, manifests and *revanas*, the Excise Commissioner and the Account Officer inspect important Customs Houses. Perhaps, as suggested by Mr. Arumukham Pillai, it would be desirable to have a Special Officer for the purpose of auditing customs accounts alone. But, that is primarily, a matter of finance.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai and Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai were speaking about the abkari policy of the Government mainly. I closely listened to their speeches. It struck me that they were representing two opposite sides of the question.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai was lamenting over the rising rentals and the consequent increase in revenue. Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai was on the other hand pointing out the fall in revenue. Almost all the honourable members who spoke on this occasion point to the desirability of promoting temperance in the State. I may inform the House that as time and again mentioned in this Council it has been the declared policy of Government to promote temperance. But I may also inform the House that during my experience of the department for over two years now, I have come across several instances in which people have been petitioning me against the abolition of the shops in their locality. Two years back I was touring about Travancore for the sale of these abkari shops. This year also I have just finished my business about a month ago. I was receiving petitions and representations from the people pointing out the inconveniences resulting from the abolition of the only toddy shop in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Kattiyattu Sivarama Panickar : May I know from the member whether he knows that such people are often visitors of these shops ?

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Mr. C. O. Madhavan : It is not always like that. In North Travancore, particularly, toddy is given to the labourers as noon-day meal. That is how it was pointed out to me. Though Government have declared more than ten years ago that it is their policy to abolish 5 per cent. of the number of shops at the time of each contract, I doubt the desirability of literally carrying out that undertaking. Perhaps it may fall to the lot of a future Excise Commissioner to bring it to the notice of Government whether that promise is to be fulfilled literally. Anyhow, I am trying to carry it on as undertaken by Government.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know from the member whether it is a fact that a case of illicit transportation of arrack was detected in broad daylight in the city of Trivandrum by the Police Department ?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : Yes, it is a fact.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know from the member, then, whether, his department is unable to investigate the source of that ?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : The department, as far as I know, is investigating into the matter. I cannot say how far they have succeeded in tracing it. It is of recent occurrence. Illicit practices in violation of the abkari law must be admitted to be going on. Though we have got the penal code prohibiting theft, murders and other offences, we find that those offences are still being committed and if things had been different there would have been no necessity for our Police, and the Magistracy.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know from the member whether his department has detected any case of illicit tapping of cocoanut trees ?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : That is a matter of almost every day occurence.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know from the member whether in such cases the department prosecutes the people or whether on the other hand they ask the people to take out licences for these trees also ?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : In very many cases they are prosecuted. In some cases the law provides for compounding and the cases are compounded. It may be that a tree is tapped by a licensed tapper for a toddy shop and though perhaps an application was submitted it may not have been marked. Technically it is an offence but in such cases the law authorises the compounding of the cases. The course depends upon the circumstances of each case. A large number of illicit tapping cases are charged and persons are convicted every year.

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Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran : May I know from the member whether it is penal for durnkards to purchase toddy obtained by illicit tapping ?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : There is no provision in the Abkari Regulation penalising the purchaser of such toddy. In the Abkari Regulation we are concerned more with the illicit tapper and seller.

Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran : May I know why the drunkard who purchases illicit toddy is not penalised ?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : That is the law.

Mr. M. Govindan : May I know from the member whether the purchaser of illicit toddy cannot be charged as an abettor ?

President : I am afraid his legal knowledge may not help him.

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : Sir, I want to say something more if I am left undisturbed. So far as temperance is concerned I may inform the House that in 1098 when the Government announced their intention to promote temperance gradually, the number of shops in Travancore was 2,006. After ten years it has been reduced to 1,574. Also the duty on arrack which stood at Rs. 3-12-0 per proof gallon has been enhanced to Rs. 5-5-0 per proof gallon. The tree tax which was Rs. 5 per cocoanut tree in 1098 has been raised to Rs. 8. In this way Government are doing whatever they can legitimately do to promote temperance without imposing prohibition upon those who want to drink.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai was lamenting over the rise in the rentals. Of course he has been expressing the very same opinion more than once in this House. I fail to understand how we can control the rise in the rentals. The shops are sold in auction. If one man offers one thousand rupees and another one thousand one hundred rupees it is not possible to give the shop to the man for the lower bid.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know from the member whether he is bound to give the shop to the highest bidder and whether he has no discretion ?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : He has discretion. But the Excise Commissioner being responsible for the revenues of the State, tries to get what he can by way of the best rental for each shop. It is not possible always to control and keep down the rentals.

Mr. M. Govindan : May I know from the member whether the free use of the discretion will not be characterised as undue patronage to some shop-keepers.

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : Yes. That was exactly what was hinted at by Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai.

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Mr. Komilezhathu Sankaran : May I know whether any member of the Legislature has approached the Excise Commissioner to reduce the rental?

Mr. C. O. Madhavan : I do not propose to answer that questson, Sir.

Mr. V. S. Arumukham Pillai : Sir, I beg permission of the House to withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

President : I now put Demand No. VIII—Excise for Rs. 5,96,650.

The grant was made.

DEMAND IX—FOREST.

Mr. R. Dhanukoti Pillai (*Conservator of Forests*) : Sir, I rise to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 7, 97,931 under Demand IX—Forest.

Mr. K. P. Nilakanta Pillai : Sir, I oppose the motion. With reference to this demand the tables are now turned on us. There seems to be not much to criticise about the working of the department, but the efficiency and the ruthless vigour with which the head of the department is administering the State forests now cause a lot of grievances. It is a known fact that one-third of the land in our small State is reserved forest. The administration report of the department for the year 1108 will show that by the vigilance adopted by the conservative Conservator of Forests, the area of the reserved forest is enhanced. The report of the Census Commissioner will show that the density of population has reached that stage which the State cannot bear. Therefore there is the clamour that more area should be thrown from the reserved forest for assignment and the demand of the people, especially the landless, should be satisfied by giving them more lands registered from the reserved forests. On the other hand the Conservator makes recommendations to Government from time to time and the lands under assignment or ordered to be assigned or lands which are under the investigation of the Settlement Officer or lands which are already occupied by unauthorised occupants, are again constituted as reserves. Therefore he is going on expanding the area of the reserve from the mountainous side of the country. We, who form the population, on account of sacrcity of land want to make encroachments on the reserves. There should be some limit to these things. Various committees appointed in Travancore recommended the necessity for throwing open a part of the reserve forest, especially the swampy areas and other portions useful for cultivation, and of registering them to the people. But the Conservator will never be amenable to such a proposal. He wants all the forests and if possible to enhance the area of the reserved forests. So, Sir, the situation has become quite complicated. There is no

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